

# PEOPLE & THINGS

MR. JOHN CHRISTIAN, chief magistrate of Pitcairn Island, sailed to Suva to meet the Queen on Thursday last. He is a direct descendant of Fletcher Christian, leader of the Bounty mutineers.

Like the other 149 islanders, he belongs to a sect known as the Biblical Essentialists. This sect was founded by John Adams, husband of ten Tahitian women and sole male survivor of an era of looting, murder and rape, who in gratitude to his Maker for being spared his life decided to devote his old age to ensuring an end to transgression.

## Isle of Innocence

NO liquor or tobacco is permitted on Pitcairn, and profanity, scandalmongering, and even quarrelling are prohibited by law. There have never been any prisoners in Pitcairn's two-cell gaol. minor offenders being punished with fines or with the task of weeding the island's roads. Mr. and Mrs. Christian hold communal hymn-singing evenings at their home, the former playing the mandolin and the latter the harmonium. Everything is done communally on the island. The inhabitants, for example, all fish on Wednesdays, gardens are tended on Thursdays, and the weekend food is prepared on Fridays.

The Pitcairn language is a mixture of pidgin-English and Tahitian, and is unique in that there is no word for "lie." If you want to question the veracity of anyone in Pitcairn you say, "Es stolly," which means, more or less, "Say that again."

## Perfidia

PERHAPS our Foreign Office is still as Machiavellian as foreigners used to pretend. It was certainly a master stroke in gamesmanship to have introduced a beautiful girl on the British side of the table at Bermuda. Miss Caroline Petrie, who acted as secretary to our delegation, is a very serious-minded girl and a specialist in the intricacies of the European Defence Community, but she is also extremely attractive.

President Eisenhower devoted most of one session to executing a neat pencil sketch of her, and it is rumoured that the drawing was put carefully away in his wallet. This is the first time a woman has been present at a Big Power conference. There are infinite possibilities for the future.

## Lest We Forget

THE bad conditions were further worsened by the long spells of frost before Christmas. There was no regular medical care, and even the daily roll-calls were held only once a week. The bodies of prisoners who had died of hunger, cold and disease were left in the barracks, and the deaths were not reported for several days. The great advantage was that the other inhabitants of the barracks could, for these few days at least, draw

By ATTICUS

the food rations the dead men would have drawn."

This is a description of last Christmas at one of the Belene forced labour camps in Bulgaria. The author escaped early this year. At a conservative estimate more than four million of our fellow creatures will be spending this Christmas in similar camps. I expect many prayers will be said for them on Friday.

## A Literary Giant

THE literary programme of Arthur Bryant would cause a paroxysm of *Angst* to grip the heart of many a Bloomsbury exquisite. With the ink hardly dry on his wonderful "Makers of the Realm," he has already started on "Rustic Glory," the second volume of his "Story of England." This will take the history of our culture from Bannockburn to the Act of Union. Volume three, "The Ocean Nations," telling of Imperial and commercial England since 1714, will follow. These will be finished in four years.

After that he will take up the detailed narrative of our nineteenth-century political and social history where he left it at the end of "The Age of Elegance," continuing it in two biographies, "Dis-

the local Indian papers. The Aga Khan's own sect, the Ismaili, are Muslims, and they are the most loyal and civic-minded of all non-Europeans in Kenya. It is the Left-wing minority of the Hindu population that is causing trouble.

Alongside a violent anti-European campaign, colour discrimination in hotels and restaurants was being attacked until a farcical incident deflated the crusaders. Some Indians have just opened a new smart restaurant. The editor and chief reporter of the Indian-owned and Left-wing "Daily Chronicle" decided to try it out. They were promptly shooed away by the African commissioner. "No Indians allowed," he said.

## Dog Eats Dog

ONE secret of the columnist's art is the ability to write something about nothing across the maximum space in the minimum time. An author with an otherwise spotless reputation who wrote Atticus before the war tells me that whenever he was at a loss for a paragraph he would look at the skyline, pick on a church spire, a gasometer or some other landmark and then reach for the telephone directory. Within a few minutes he would be writing "It may not be generally known that . . .

"Strix," of "The Spectator," went one better last week. For half his famous "Notebook," less seven lines, he managed to maintain erratic and clearly laborious flight amongst what he illiterately describes as the "poms de plume" of Fleet Street columnists. In revenge for his description of the authors of Atticus as "jockeys who are hired for a season or two and then dismissed," I will reveal that "Strix" has a fixation about pseudonyms dating from the cradle, in which he was known as "Pudding."

And thus, as described in my first sentence, do columnists fill their and incidentally each other's columns.

## Pullmanese

TWO friends of mine took the famous boat-trains on Wednesday to see passengers off on the Queen Mary. One took the tea-time train and had an excellent tea for 3s. the other took the dinner train and had a bad dinner for 8s. 6d. I think the Pullman Car Company should put its best foot forward for these farewell meals and not confine its efforts to

## How to Get on in Society

BY JOHN BETJEMAN

*Phone for the fish-knives Norman,  
As cook is a little unnerved;  
You kiddies have crumpled the serviettes  
And I must have things daintily served.*

*Are the requisites all in the toilet?  
The fruit round the cutlets can wait  
Till the girl has replenished the cruets  
And switched on the logs in the grate.*

*It's ever so close in the lounge dear,  
But the vestibule's comfy for tea,  
And Howard is out riding on horseback  
So do come and take some with me.*

*Now here is a fork for your pastries  
And do use the couch for your feet;  
I know what I wanted to ask you—  
Is trifles sufficient for sweet?*

*Milk and then just as it comes dear?  
I'm afraid the preserve's full of stones.  
Beg pardon, I'm soiling the doileys  
With afternoon tea-cake and scones.*

This authoritative but oft misquoted guide to gracious living is here reprinted by kind permission of the author.

relli" and "Cecil Rhodes," using for the second the unpublished papers which the Rhodes Trustees are placing at his disposal.

Then, he tells me, "If I outline Lord Alanbrooke and am still in possession of my senses, which seems unlikely," he has promised the Royal Regiment of Artillery and Lord Alanbrooke to write the latter's life, using his diaries,

which, says Bryant, are some of the most remarkable he has ever read. After that, I hope he will set aside a period to enjoy the laurels of a grateful country.

## Restricted Clientele

ON his way back to Kenya last week Sir Evelyn Baring paid a visit to the Aga Khan and discussed with him the Indian problem which at this unpropitious moment has flared up again in Nairobi, and is being fanned by

a lot of empty hyperbole on the menu which lists a number of dishes in bogus Americanese (none of them available on Wednesday such as "Pan Fried Sole," "Dry Toast and Curled Butter," and "Smoked Salmon and Quartered L-mon."

## No Conil He

THIS is the season for the favourite recipes of famous people, and just in case everything goes wrong at Christmas or the cook has a stroke, here is the favourite emergency recipe of the Royal Navy. Raft of fried bread Upon it a large slice of cooked ham or bacon. Upon that one or two poached eggs. Smother with melted cheese. Devour very hot. This is known as a "Cheesy-eggy hammy-topside." Wash down with "Hell's Delight"—hot Bovril lace with cheap sherry.